Morris Cerullo - Voice of Healing

MORRIS CERULLO

Morris Cerullo was a comparative latecomer to the Healing Revival but became one of the leading campaigners of the 1970s.

Cerullo was born in Passaic, New Jersey to a Russo-Jewish-Italian family. His parents died in an automobile accident when he was very young, so he was raised in various orphanages, the last being an Orthodox Jewish orphanage in New Jersey. Here he became very depressed and considered suicide, but everything changed when a Christian nurse joined the staff. This gracious lady began to speak to Morrice about Jesus and gave him a Bible, which he began to read at night, hidden under the bedclothes! He gave his life to Christ when he was 14 years of age. Understandably, this soon caused problems in the Jewish orphanage and the

pressure from the directors forced him to leave. He then attended a public school until he was 15 or 16 years old, but already he was preaching three or four times a week in local churches after he saw a vision of people suffering the torments of hell.

When he was 17 he received a scholarship to the New York Metropolitan Bible School in Suffern, New York and, after he graduated, he began ministering with his fiancé Theresa who would soon become his wife. In the early 1950s, he was ordained as a minister in the Assemblies of God.

There is uncertainty about the timing of his venturing into the healing ministry, but it was definitely before March 1953 when the Voice of Healing Magazine advertised his ministry at The Pentecostal Tabernacle, New Jersey. This entry lists him as a 'TVH evangelist,' meaning he already enjoyed a successful healing ministry.

Similar references in the VOH magazine occurred through 1953 until October, when he was listed as a speaker at the prestigious 6th Annual Voice of Healing Convention held at Philadelphia, Penn. Held in November of that year. Clearly, he had moved on from his earlier appeal as a "converted Jew" to becoming a powerful and dramatic speaker ranking with the other national healing evangelists. Throughout the 1960's he held powerful healing crusades throughout America but gradually embarked upon an international ministry holding impressive meetings abroad throughout that decade.

He remained with the Voice of Healing organization until the early 1960's when he began his own organization based in San Diego. In 1963 He began publishing the magazine, Deeper Life, which by 1973 had a circulation of around 150,000. Harrel states that 'Cerullo was second only to A. A. Allen in keeping alive healing revivalism in the 1960's.'

In 1966, his ministry included a crusade team of six people and a headquarters staff of seven, including Mrs. Cerullo. By 1973, his organization, called World Evangelism, employed about forty-five people.

In the late 1960s, he held crusades in the United States and used them to fund his support of native missions around the world. He realized that the key to reaching the world was to train indigenous nationals to reach their own people. Thousands of Christian ministers were raised up to reach their nations, by conducting Schools of Ministry around the world.

Velmer Gardner, long retired from the active ministry himself, wrote, “There is no doubt that God is using Brother Cerullo to reach more people on foreign fields than any ministry or organization today. I am praying that God will keep him humble and use him even in a greater way!” Evangelist David Nunn said, “Morris Cerullo is still having tremendous meetings on the overseas trail. He has twenty, forty, fifty, sometimes a hundred thousand people in his meetings there.” World Evangelism estimated in 1973 that over 1,000,000 people had been converted in the Cerullo crusades.’ (Harrel)
After 1971, Cerullo increasingly concentrated on training native evangelists to be “miracle workers.” Through a National Evangelist Crusades program, he hoped to build an army of native preachers to replace American missionaries. Cerullo regularly conducted large schools of evangelism in South America and sponsored over 3,000 crusades conducted by native preachers. (Harrell)

In the early 70’s Cerullo turned his attention homeward. ‘In a five-day crusade in Los Angeles in 1971, Cerullo preached to over 18,000 people and reported 2,000 healings. He adopted many of the techniques used successfully by Oral Roberts in the 1950’s. He courted local politicians and celebrities and tried hard to win the support of local pastors. He established open financial policies in his campaigns in an attempt to satisfy local pastors and insisted that his crusades were designed to “build, edify, and bless the local church.” Although Cerullo did not escape criticism from the organized Pentecostal denominations, he frequently won the cooperation of the Assemblies of God and other churches.” (Harrell)

A major reason that kept Morris Cerullo on the front lines of the healing ministry was his increasing involvement with the developing charismatic movement. From 1966 he had been conducting Deeper Life Conferences across America which were attended by growing numbers of charismatic converts.
Another connection was with the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International led by Demos Shakarian, which was also breaking into the charismatic arena.

His message and ministry seemed tailor-made for the emerging charismatics. He was still comparatively young in the mid-70's and the current writer well remembers his campaign in the Westminster Central Hall in London which was so explosive that it shocked the established church there. People were overcome by the Holy Spirit and many claimed supernatural healing. In another London meeting two decades later he witnessed the powerful healing of a young cripple who was carried on the stage by his Muslim father. He could barely stand, let alone walk. Within a few minutes the boy was running across the stage, his onlooking father in tears. He couldn't speak good English but managed to say to the packed crowd that 'today he begins to follow Jesus.' The crowd responded in the most riotous way, throwing things up in the air and shouting with thanks to God. It was an amazing sight!

What an astounding ministry! For almost seven decades Cerullo has seen the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear and the Gospel preached – sometimes up to 500,000 people in one service! He has ministered to presidents, prime ministers, and heads of state in many nations. He has written over 200 classic Christian books, unique study Bibles and devotionals as well as an abundance of teaching and training materials on audio and video. Morris Cerullo has established many organizations and facilities around the world to teach and train new Christians, not

to mention his ministries to the poor.

He will surely receive his, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’

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